

Using Local History in the Classroom

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California banking and statistics, compiled by the Federal Reserve System, would have focused the part of the study about individual banks and regional and national trends. Finally, the author treats the highly significant theme of colonialism too casually; he needs to identify as precisely as possible magnitudes and trends of outside ownership and influence throughout the history of Arizona banking. Nevertheless, the book synthesizes the extant literature, corrects some errors, analyzes many bank records, and is the best study of the topic to date.

Future students of the history of banking in Arizona and elsewhere should focus on such topics as biographies of individual banks, collective biographies of bankers, personnel and labor policies of banks, comparisons of banking in states with regional and national trends, nonbank financial institutions, and economic analyses of the qualitative hypothesis that banks played major roles in the growth of various states' economies. Schweikart's interesting book will be a useful reference for those topics.

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Using Local History in the Classroom, by Fay D. Metcalf and Matthew T. Downey. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1982. x, 284 pp. Illustrations, notes, appendixes, index. \$17.50 cloth.

Using Local History in the Classroom is a practical guide for teachers introducing high school and college students to the discovery and interpretation of local historical materials. Access to resources, methods of research, recent scholarly trends in local history, and the organization of classroom activities are among the topics considered. The authors, Fay D. Metcalf of Boulder High School and Matthew T. Downey of the University of Colorado, set out to produce "a how-to-do-it manual for developing the semester-long course and for incorporating local history projects into a variety of other classes." In so doing, they have collected information about archival procedures and historiographical techniques. The result is a readable, handsomely designed volume that should be of interest not only to teachers but to anyone interested in the burgeoning field of local history.

The book begins with a chapter-long discussion of the rationale for local history, with much attention to academic historians' criticisms of the field over the years. The authors admit local history has leaned toward the parochial and filiopietistic and insist its current practitioners must strive for intellectual rigor if they wish their work to be taken seriously. Teachers will strengthen the field as a whole to

the extent that they steer students clear of the ancestor worship and mindless collection of trivia that often characterize local historical writing. The authors are also wary of current enthusiasms: "ancestor worship . . . has a modern-day counterpart that teachers using local history must take care to avoid. Its modern form is the celebration of locality, ethnicity, or family, indulged in more for therapeutic purposes than for the purpose of historical understanding." Worthwhile classroom projects must be "governed by that spirit of critical-mindedness and intellectual honesty central to any kind of scholarly endeavor." They add, "let the chips fall where they may." The teacher's responsibility for supervising a dozen or more different student projects at a time can be enormously time-consuming work, so larger pedagogical goals need to be made explicit and kept clearly in view throughout the period of research and writing. "Curiosity and personal interest in a topic may lead a student into a local history investigation," the authors warn, "but these alone will not guarantee that the student will come away with historical understanding. It is the teacher's responsibility to help the student develop the topic within some broader historical or conceptual framework."

With these and other forewarnings, Metcalf and Downey consider three aspects of using local history in the classroom: methods and sources, content and concepts, and the mechanics of setting up a local history course. The chapters on methods and sources offer advice and information on various research opportunities, on the evaluation and analysis of historical data, and on standards for judging student projects. A compendium on the availability of written and visual sources of information followed by an annotated bibliography of specialized readings, is helpful. Also included is an attractively illustrated review of material culture as a source for local history, which shows how buildings, public art, and other artifacts offer ways to recreate a sense of a community's past and the experiences of the families and individuals who lived there. Knowing how to look for historical information will constitute much of the teacher's lesson to the student, and the authors provide useful tips on gaining the necessary expertise.

A four-chapter section on content and concepts describes recent research trends in family, economic, social, and political history, with reference to several dozen specific studies. Here the authors discuss the findings of skilled practitioners of local history and suggest ways students can draw upon and extend the analyses of professional scholars. In one example chosen for examination, Metcalf and Downey show how the celebrated mobility studies of Stephan Thernstrom and his followers can serve as an introduction to the historical

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study of careers in a local setting. Even for those not concerned with classroom training in local history, these four chapters provide an excellent review of the literature; the authors present their reports in terms novices can understand and experts will appreciate.

Metcalf and Downey conclude with an itemized list of procedures related to the day-to-day business of running a local history course, and emphasize the kinds of preparatory work needed to better the odds for success in the classroom. I wish I had had benefit of their counsel before I ventured forth into a room full of students eager to tell the stories of their forebears. *Using Local History in the Classroom* is a valuable book; the authors and their publisher deserve much thanks.

AMES, IOWA

WILLIAM SILAG

Book Notices

Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870, by Sylvia Van Kirk. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983. 301 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index, \$21.50 cloth, \$9.95 paper.)

This work is full of new information, new interpretations, and new insights. The author, a professor at the University of Toronto, depicts women's environment and social structure even though restricted to sources written primarily by men. She shows that Indian women, married to white fur traders, were not mere sexual servants, but aided in the entire fur-trade movement. White women arriving on the nineteenth-century frontier could not readily compete with the Indian women. The Canadian fur trade would have grown at a much slower rate had it not been for its "many tender ties." This book will stand as the forerunner of all studies of the role of women in fur-trading society.

Forts and Supplies: The Role of the Army in the Economy of the Southwest, 1846-1861, by Robert W. Frazer. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983. 253 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index, \$22.50 cloth.)

For fifteen years prior to the Civil War, the American army was the major force in the Southwest's economic development. By establishing military forts, the army encouraged the expansion of settlement, agriculture, ranching, and mining. Military purchases of services and locally produced goods introduced much larger sums of

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